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THE POPULAR BALLAD. By Francis B. Gummere. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., New York and Boston, 1907.

PSYCHOLOGIE DER VOLKSDICHTUNG. Von Dr. Otto Böckel. Verlag von B. G. Teubner in Leipzig, 1906.

The Popular Ballad is Professor Gummere's fifth attempt to explain and establish his doctrine of the ballad. The first was made in the Introduction to his *Old English Ballads* (Athenæum Press Series) in 1894. In 1897 he stated his position boldly, but without much room for proof, in an article on *The Ballad and Communal Poetry* in the Child Memorial Volume. Four years later came *The Beginnings of Poetry*, in which what began as an explanation of British balladry has become an evolutionary theory of the relation of poetry to social development, supported by extensive study of the poetry of uncivilized and semi-civilized peoples. Pressed by his critics to show how ballads, as we have them in English, are to be connected with 'primitive poetry' as expounded in the latter work, he replied in a series of papers in the first volume of *Modern Philology*. Finally he has reviewed the whole matter, restated it and begun again, as Hosea Biglow says, with due regard to his most formidable critics, in the volume now under consideration. Despite his playful warning to "gentle readers" to begin with the second chapter, it is the first chapter (comprising about one-third of the whole volume), with its labored discussion of ballad origins, that is of chief interest to scholars. The second chapter is a classification, on the basis of that discussion and marked throughout by admirable critical taste and judgment, of the ballads in Child's collection; the two remaining chapters, both posited on the initial theory, deal briefly with "The Sources of the Ballads" and "The Worth of the Ballads." Accordingly it is with the first chapter, "The Ballad," that we are chiefly concerned. The qualified assent of Mr. Lang and Mr. Sidgwick in the old country, the cordial approval of Professor Kittredge, and the fact that Dr. W. M. Hart's important study of *Ballad and Epic* is in great part founded upon the same theory, show that we have to do here not with one man's lucubrations merely but with a school of criticism, what we might call the school of Child. Child himself, than whom no man was better fitted to speak on the subject, unfortunately left no final definition or theory of the ballad; and it is this omission which his distinguished pupil has undertaken to supply.

The ballad question, from the beginning, has been one of definition. Hardly any reader of Scott's *Minstrelsy* or of Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* can fail to perceive, more or less distinctly, a special esthetic effect in these

rude poems. Vaguely and subjectively, the ballad is a poetic kind to all modern readers. But the student must go further. What are the qualities, the intrinsic constituent elements that give us as a subjective effect the notion of a ballad? Or is it something in the genesis and history of the poems that holds them together as a kind? Until these questions are answered there can be no scientific criticism of the ballad; for the very basis of science is classification. Unless analysis reveals in what we have vaguely held together in mind as ballads some distinguishing characteristics either of structure and style or of origin and history or of both together, the ballad as a kind has, scientifically, no existence, and it is quite impossible to determine whether any given poem shall be classed as a ballad or not. Since the completion of Child's great collection the ballad problem in England and America, especially for Child's disciples, has taken a more definite shape: to find those principles of ballad style or those facts of ballad history which guided the great editor in making up what he believed to be a complete collection of British balladry; so to define the ballad, in structure and in genesis, that the *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* shall stand as a critically established canon of the ballad for our speech.

The distinguishing merit of Professor Gummere's work is that he has pointed out—and never before so convincingly as in the first chapter of this his latest book—the structural differentiae of the ballad style. Anonymity and oral transmission, tho they are conditions of the ballad as we know it, are not of course intrinsic characters. Anonymity may in any given case be an accident; and both together, tho they may satisfy Dr. Meier as a test for *volkslied*, would admit a vast and heterogeneous body of verse not only excluded from all accepted ballad collections but without any intrinsic principle of cohesion. Many other facts about ballads have been noted: that they tell a story in an objective, impersonal way; that they are rude in diction, without figurative ornament, metrically rough, and uncertain in rime; that they commonly follow a certain stanzaic form, and make great use of the refrain. None of these facts—not even the last, important as is the part played by the refrain in ballad style—nor all of them together, afford a satisfactorily definite characterization of the ballad type or account for that sense of the ballad as a kind which is so strongly borne in upon every discriminating reader of the better collections. Professor Gummere, after due consideration of each of these, proceeds to show what are the real differentiae, structural and fundamental, of the ballad as a kind. These are (1) the presentation of the story as a situation, and (2) incremental repetition.

The ballad typically, he points out (and nearly all the ballads in Child will be found to follow this type, in varying degrees of closeness), takes a situation or a related series of situations, and with the least possible introduction or with none at all presents it to the hearer, most often in dialog. In *Edward* the situation is single, with no introduction, and in dialog through-out; so likewise in *Lord Randal*. In *The Demon Lover* there are two situations, both in dialog, with two stanzas of narration between them and one of catastrophe at the end (so in Child's D, and in the traditional version current in Missouri); *Sweet William's Ghost* has one stanza of introduction and one of transition between the two dialog scenes. From these and many like specimens of the simple ballad of situation it would not be difficult to trace a regular gradation of diminishing dramatic and increasing narrative method up to the long martial, historical or pseudo-historical ballads such as *Otterburn* and *Cheviot* and the *Gest*, which are furthest removed from the type, tho they happen to have been the first to come on record. But in all of them the tendency to dwell upon situations and to leave out or hurry over connecting matter will be found; and this is one of the two things that constitute the essential ballad character.

The other is incremental repetition. This is Professor Gummere's term for that structural peculiarity which gives us most strongly the ballad impression. It is not repetition for emphasis, it is not refrain. It is that method of telling a story in which successive stanzas reveal the situation or advance the interest by successive changes of a single phrase or line in the stanza, the rest of the stanza remaining the same. It may be illustrated, with more or less exactness, from pretty nearly every ballad in Child's collection; typically from *Babylon*, *Edward*, *Lord Randal*, *The Gay Goshawk*, *The Lass of Roch Royal*, and scores of others. A favorite form of it is what Gummere calls the "relative-climax," in which a question is asked of or by, or a demand made upon, a series of relatives—father, mother, brother, sister, a succession of brothers, or the like—ending with the one who is to meet the demand or answer the question. But it may be simply a progressive dialog between man and woman, mother and daughter, master and servant. It may even be, in its least distinctive phase, no more than the 'ballad commonplace' used to fill out stanzas. In one form or another, however, it is a persistent mark of the ballads in Child's collection; and it is most evident in precisely those ballads which, from Scott's time to ours, have been accepted as best embodying the *idea* of the ballad. Anyone who will take the pains to read thru the output of the nineteenth century bal-

lad press as preserved in the collections of the British Museum will find that the infrequent items that stand out with almost startling distinctness from the waste of dulness and bad taste in which they are imbedded as specimens of the 'genuine' ballad do so by virtue of one or both of the structural characteristics that Professor Gummere has defined. Thus to have pointed out the specific causes of the ballad 'effect' is no slight contribution to critical science. It is a step forward which we shall certainly not have to retrace, and that is decidedly a boon in the tortuous thickets of ballad discussion.

To establish the structural characteristics of the ballad is not, however, the only or even the chief aim of Professor Gummere's study. For him this is merely an argument for a larger thesis upon which he has been at work for fifteen years,—the thesis, namely, that ballads are a survival of communal poetry. Dramatic situation and incremental repetition are for him the crowning proof that the ballad is distinguished from other poetry not in style and effect only but in origin. As a survival of folk-made poetry the ballad is for him a species, or rather a genus, fundamentally different from the 'poetry of the schools.' If this distinction of origin is denied, he says, "all boundaries of the subject are obscured, the material is questionable, and a haze at once fills the air." Why, one asks, must the material be questionable if there are acknowledged structural and stylistic tests of ballad character that may be applied in any given case? The test of origin can never, as Gummere himself repeatedly shows, be directly applied to the ballads that we have. There is no record of the origin of any one of them, unless it be in Mr. Henderson's notes to the *Minstrelsy*. Communal origin is merely inferred from the structural character of the ballads. The style and structure is the test by which the material is to be sifted and the boundaries of the kind established. The relation of this style and structure to the origin of the kind or of particular ballads, to primitive poetry, communal making, and the antithesis of poet and folk—these are independent, tho doubtless pertinent, questions. If the denial of communal authorship at once fills the air with haze, it cannot be said that Professor Gummere's affirmation of it does much to clear the atmosphere. *The Popular Ballad* is an improvement in this respect upon his former discussions, defining the problem on certain sides with admirable distinctness, but leaving his position on many important questions undetermined or at least not easy to ascertain.

The best way, probably, to bring out the bearings of his doctrine and define his meaning will be to try his theory upon some accepted and characteristic ballad. This I shall endeavor to do.

But certain fundamental conditions of the problem, and a certain underlying assumption that governs his attitude toward it, must be made clear.

In the first place, we must distinguish between the origin of the form and style of the ballad and the origin of any particular ballad. To find the source of the ballad type in the homogeneous dancing throng of primitive society is one thing, to find the authorship of one of our British ballads in the same throng is quite another. The Greek drama, in its essential structure, is confidently traced to the same source; but no one proceeds from that to ascribe any given play to the throng. And it is not apparent, without further argument, why the ballad form, once established, may not have been used as a model by individual poets in making the ballads that we have.

In the second place, the distinction between the ballad and 'artistic' poetry as impersonal and individual respectively is not one of kind but merely one of degree. This of course Professor Gummere knows, since he has expounded it in a masterly fashion in *The Beginnings of Poetry*; yet in all that he has written on the ballad he has insisted upon this difference as proof that the ballad is different generically from other poetry. The distinction is particularly ineffective as a means of separating 'authentic' balladry from the kind of verse that Gummere and his school are most solicitous to exclude from the canon, "the vulgar ballads of our day," which, says Child, are "the products of a low kind of art" and "belong to a different genus." Nothing could be more stereotyped and conventional, more impersonal, than the countless versions of the Returned Lover theme that poured from the ballad press and roared from the throats of the vulgar in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but are excluded from *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. That they are, "from a literary point of view, thoroughly despicable and worthless" is quite true, but this is not due to the intrusion of individual artistry.

In the third place, it is impossible to draw a definite line between the reproductive and inventive processes in composition. At one extreme we have, to be sure, mere reproduction without invention; but we have not at the other extreme pure invention without reproduction, since all human art, the savage choral and the *Song of Myself* as surely as *Paradise Lost*, uses precedent method and material. In the oral transmission of ballads, particularly, it is impossible to distinguish by any general principles between the merely repetitive and the modifying or inventive activities of successive reciters. And the activity of the ballad-hack who writes out copies for the broadside press is not generically different from that of the modifying singer or re-

citer. His taste may be different, but he is no more and no less an 'individual artist' than Mrs. Brown of Falkland.*

Finally, it is evident that Professor Gummere's repeated assertion that ballad making is a closed account, as well as his contention for a peculiar origin of ballads, springs from a desire to secure distinction and a venerable, if not aristocratic, pedigree for ballad poetry. The folk themselves, or rather the vulgar of our own time and the country people of eighteenth century Scotland among whom ballads have been found, do not for the most part distinguish them from the "low kind of *art*" that Child condemned. But the literary man and the scholar does. And he is not content with selecting the 'good' ballads, nor even with ascertaining by analysis what are the characteristics of the good (or 'authentic,' or 'genuine') ballad; he strives to separate it from its despised neighbors by a gulf as wide as civilization and reaching back to the beginnings of human society. Altho they are of record only from about the time of the invention of printing, and existed in their best estate—that is to say, the best specimens are recorded—in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; altho earlier English and continental poetry shows nothing analogous to the ballad, and what are often supposed to be allusions to popular ballads in early chronicle are shown by Professor Gummere himself, in one of the most convincing sections of his book, to refer rather, for the most part at least, to minstrelsy or to aristocratic poetry of art; yet he asks us to see, in the ballads of Child's collection, the remains of a kind of poetry and of a method of composition older than *Widsith* and *Beowulf*; and further, to believe that social conditions which rendered possible such an efflorescence of this sort of composition in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have so completely passed away that ballad making is no longer possible. In this way he would assure a peculiar distinction to the ballads in Child's collection, and at the same time lock the door against any inquisitive experimenter who might wish to test the theory of communal composition of ballads in living society.

Let us, then, see what the doctrine of communal origin means for a typical ballad. I shall select for the purpose not an early chronicle ballad like *Otterburn*, once held to be the glory of the collections but now, along with the *Gest* of Robin Hood, yielded more or less definitely to the epic category and the individual

*To whom we owe many of the best versions of our ballads; and who, it should be remembered, was by no means a representative of unlettered and homogeneous society, but the wife of a clergyman and daughter of an Aberdeen professor, a lady who "writes verses, and reads everything in the marvellous way."—Anderson's letter to Percy, in Nichols's *Illustrations of Literature*, VII, 88.

poet, nor any of the later pieces of the sentimental or lewd or "journalistic" type that Professor Gummere is likewise almost ready to surrender. I shall take that "genuine ballad of tradition, still undeveloped into epic breadth" and duly characterized by dramatic situation and incremental repetition, preserved too in a satisfactory number and variety of versions—a ballad that all ballad lovers love—*Mary Hamilton*.

I choose it, of course, because we may with some confidence give it a date *a quo*. It seems to tell of an incident supposed to have occurred at the court of Mary Queen of Scots in 1563,—or possibly of a similar incident that occurred at the Russian court, but with a Scottish lady as protagonist, in 1718. Child was inclined to refer it to the latter event, but Mr. Lang converted him to the earlier date. Neither Child, nor Mr. Lang, nor Professor Kittredge, nor Professor Gummere seems to doubt that it is based on an actual occurrence, one or the other of these. *Mary Hamilton*, then, is not older than the last third of the sixteenth century. But since it meets satisfactorily all the tests of the "genuine ballad of tradition," it will serve as well as *Earl Brand* or *Sir Patrick Spens* to bring out the meaning of "communal origin." Whatever conclusion we reach as to the probable origin of *Mary Hamilton* may be applied to other equally authentic and genuine ballads and to the ballad as a kind.

The following are, I believe, the possible hypotheses as to the origin of *Mary Hamilton*:

1. The several versions as we have them are the work of individual poets.

2. The several versions as we have them are the result of tradition working upon an original poem or poems of individual authorship.

3. The several versions as we have them are the result of tradition working upon an original poem or poems composed in and by the homogeneous festal throng.

1. The first hypothesis need not detain us long, yet its implications should be definitely brought out. It means that, in so far as the several versions can be distinguished in matter or manner, in incident, arrangement, and phraseology, each is the work of a separate author. It does not attempt to distinguish between tradition and invention in the work of these authors, nor to point out an original version; but it sees in each variation the choice or invention of an individual poet, and, consequently, in each version a separate poem. At one extreme, it merely emphasizes the individual element in the process of tradition; at the other, it recognizes the traditional element in the work of the individual poet. It does not imply in any case the book-

learned, subjective, solitary poet of the school, of the ivory tower and the library, whom Professor Gummere threatens us with as the only alternative to impersonal authorship. It merely supposes more or less gifted, more or less professional individuals among the simple folk who, bred to and loving the ballad style and knowing the story of Mary Hamilton, made their several ballads upon it for the people to sing. And it does not deny a dependence of one version upon another, or of all the versions we have upon a version or versions now lost. It does, however, imply that the ballad style is one that may be learned and practised by the individual poet under favorable social conditions, and that poems so composed may pass into oral tradition. And here it is that the present hypothesis bears upon the doctrine of communal origin. Once it is acknowledged that a genuine and authentic ballad may be composed by an individual, the whole contention for a distinctive genesis of ballads falls away, the antithesis between the school and the folk is nugatory, and the savage choral, the Siberian native, even the Faroe fishermen are beside the point. If an individual poet in the seventeenth or eighteenth century made one of our authentic ballads, then there is no distinction of impersonal authorship to protect the integrity of the ballad *corpus*.

But this supposition leaves undetermined the important and difficult distinction between original composition and traditional modification; and we proceed to the second hypothesis.

2. By the terms of this hypothesis the quality of the original poem is not defined except as the work of an individual poet. He may have been simply the rustic singer described above, he may have been a belated minstrel, a journalistic hack, or a gentleman of culture and refinement; or *she* may have been a gypsy wife or a lady of literary aspirations like Elizabeth Wardlaw. But it is implied that the recorded versions of *Mary Hamilton* proceed from an original poem or poems of personal authorship that told the story of Mary Hamilton in a form that commended itself to the people and passed into oral tradition. This poem (I shall speak of it henceforth in the singular to avoid repetition) need not have been in the ballad style at all. The American poem of *Young Charlotte*, a story of a young girl frozen to death at her lover's side on the way to a Christmas dance, has been sung for a generation or more among simple folk in half a dozen states from Maine to Missouri; it is, to those who sing it, a completely authorless popular ballad, and no trace of a printed copy has yet been found; yet it has no item of the structural character of the ballad as ascertained by Professor Gummere's analysis—no refrain, no 'situation,' no repetition, no ballad commonplace—and it has not a little descrip-

tion, reflection, and other elements of the 'poetry of art.' But this point need not be labored; it is well recognized that poems quite without the ballad character pass into oral tradition. And indeed it is assumed in this second hypothesis, in distinction from the first, that the technical ballad character in our versions of *Mary Hamilton* has come in by oral tradition.

Would this assumption be acceptable to Professor Gummere? From certain passages in his book one gathers that it would. Tradition, he says, "is a prime factor in ballads; it chooses and moulds its material in its own way" (p. 38). It accounts for "the many variants, the versions more or less diverging in stuff and style, . . . and for all the peculiarities that that sort of transmission must bring about; but it will not account for the original ballad" (p. 64). Tradition "has made over and over again the stuff of communal song" (p. 62). "Not only is a ballad changed to almost any extent in tradition, not only does tradition itself largely determine the matter and the style, but there is still the possibility, often enough fact, of parts of one ballad fusing with parts of another and so forming a piece which in course of time may come to its own individual rights" (p. 310). This seems to give ample room and verge enough for the work of tradition in shaping, from an original poem of individual authorship and no distinct ballad qualities, the 'authentic' versions of *Mary Hamilton* that we have. Tradition in this sense means repetition from imperfect recollection, with its accompaniments of omission, substitution, combination, and more or less conscious approximation to familiar types; and traditional *singing*, where the air must go on tho the memory fails, would seem likely to give rise to the repetition which is so marked a feature of ballad style. Viewed closely, every such modification of the original poem is the work of some individual; seen from a distance and collectively it may without confusion be described as an activity of the folk, the work of tradition.

But it soon appears that this is not the doctrine of *The Popular Ballad*. That the conditions of oral transmission can give rise to the structural peculiarities of the ballad Professor Gummere flatly denies. "Tradition," he says, "which could make no literary form, and simply accepted the ballad as its rhythmic expression, modified that form to suit epic needs, and made the various ballads as we have them" (p. 287). Whatever else this sentence may mean, it clearly denies to tradition any power of originating the ballad style. Tradition is not, it seems, a rule that will work both ways. It will modify a choral form "to suit epic needs," but it will not modify an epic form—the simple narrative of our hypothesis—to suit the choral needs

of ballad-folk. "This Malaprop theory," he cries, "will never do," and he gives short shrift to Dr. John Meier's *Kunstlieder im Volksmunde*. His argument is not exactly luminous; but it is evident that to recognize in tradition itself the source of ballad qualities is to set ajar "the gates of authentic balladry" which he has already had to defend against the insidious attacks of Mr. Henderson, and leave ballad-making an open instead of a closed account.

Perhaps, however, we should understand the sentence quoted above to mean, in the case of *Mary Hamilton*, that tradition, having "accepted," from whatever source, "the ballad as its rhythmic expression, made the various" versions "as we have them." But made them from what? Tradition works upon material given. "It will not account for the original ballads." The story must enter upon its traditionary course in some form, and presumably in a form suited to oral transmission. Did *Mary Hamilton* begin, then, as a poem of individual authorship? That is the hypothesis we are now examining. Professor Kittredge, apparently, accepts it. "That ballads are initially the work of individual authors like any other poem," he says, "may probably be the truth with respect to most and perhaps all of the English and Scottish ballads which have survived." This is a simple and intelligible position. It recognizes the individual maker, and yet leaves ample room for the modifying powers of tradition. But it can hardly be what Professor Gummere means; for it ascribes no distinctive origin to the ballads of our collections, leaves the labored antithesis between the poet and the throng unapplied, and assigns no necessary function to communal composition in the making of ballads. Above all, it provides no "definition by origin" to guide us in establishing the ballad *corpus*. If individual poets made, or made the originals of, the ballads in Child's collection, we have nothing but structural peculiarities and the facts of anonymity and oral currency by which to test any new applicant for admission.

Our typical ballad, then, must not be ascribed to an individual poet, either directly or thru the medium of tradition. It remains to consider the third hypothesis.

3. The theory of communal origin, as applied to the ballad of *Mary Hamilton*, may be briefly stated. It means that, at some time later than the year 1563, there were in northern Britain homogeneous communities in which the story of Mary Hamilton, being generally known, was, upon occasion of some festal gathering, made into a ballad by the assembled company to the rhythm of the dance and probably of some rude but familiar tune; and that the ballad so composed passed into tradition.

To comprehend the full significance of this theory, however, we must scrutinize it more closely. Observe, first, that the poetic product of this homogeneous throng had the essential qualities of the ballad, and really told the story; for otherwise we must assign to tradition, which "makes no literary form" and "does not account for the original ballad," or to subsequent individual authorship, the structural characteristics and the narrative content of the versions that we have. Observe, further, that the story is familiar to the community, but not in definite poetic form; not as a ballad certainly, for by the terms of our hypothesis the ballad of Mary Hamilton is not yet in existence; not as remembered minstrelsy or "journalism," for then our "original" ballad ceases to be the original and communal composition is indistinguishable from tradition.

Just how does this homogeneous festal throng make a ballad? What is this lost method of poetic creation?

"Improvisation and tradition," we are told, "is the ballad formula." The original of *Mary Hamilton* was improvised in the dancing throng. By one or by many? If by one, we have again the individual poet that Professor Gummere is striving to eliminate. For surely the successful improviser of even a rude ballad is decidedly the "gifted individual" that even Mr. Lang recognizes as the author of poetry among the Australian blacks. The ballad "was composed originally, as any other poem is composed, by the rhythmic and imaginative efforts of a human mind" (p. 61). This seems unequivocal; and it leaves the individual poet intact. Here is no genetic distinction between ballads and other poetry, none certainly between "genuine" ballads and those that "are the product of a low kind of art." On the score of individual initiative and personal art, there is nothing to choose between this hypothetical improviser and the manufacturer of nineteenth century gallows pieces. If, on the other hand, our ballad was improvised bit by bit by various members of the throng, each accepting the suggestions of the stanzas made before his, and adding his own item of development, we have at last—not in strict logic perhaps, but in effect—something distinct from personal authorship. The shaping power of imagination, the construction and development of the piece, is no longer the function of the individual but a function of the communal consciousness. The piece is under this assumption the product not of a mind, but of the consenting and unified activity of many minds. This apparently is Professor Gummere's conception of ballad origin. And it will not be denied that it is, for our language, an extinct method of composition. Indeed it is more than that; it is a method that never, in any recorded British instance, has produced a ballad

that we can examine and test. Even the hardworked ballad of the Faroe fishermen is not preserved. All other instances of 'communal' improvisation in Europe of which the product is accessible and has been examined show not a ballad at all but something quite different, *schnaderhüpfl*, *stev*, *stornello*, flyting, keening, all of which are the work not of communal composition as we have just conceived it but of individual composition on traditional lines under the stimulus of competition or of fellowship. From these to the ballad there is no getting over but by the flying leap of conjecture.

But "There is no miracle, no mystery even, to be assumed for the making of the ballad." It was originally composed like any other poem by the rhythmic and imaginative efforts of a human mind. "The differencing factors lie in the conditions of the process, not in the process for itself." What are these differencing factors? With this question we reach the last, tho hardly the strongest, hold of those who would maintain a distinctive genesis for our ballad.

Substantially these factors are all included in the term "homogeneous society." Primitive society was "homogeneous." The Siberians that Radloff studied are marked by "an almost inconceivable uniformity." In *The Beginnings of Poetry* evidence is heaped together from ethnologists and anthropologists to prove the homogeneity of savage life. In "primitive" or "homogeneous" society there is no cultural distinction of classes, no aristocracy of taste or breeding, and consequently no "vulgar." Instead there is "the folk," living a common material, intellectual, and emotional life. And this emotional life finds its characteristic expression in the festal dance with its accompaniment of improvised song. In this festal throng the relation of the individual to the mass, in the matter of making poetry, is something quite foreign to our civilized experience. The individual is merely the mouthpiece of the communal emotion or imagination, what he utters is accepted at once by the rest as tho it were their own expression, is at once repeated in choral unison, being indeed but an insignificant item in the general mass of choral repetition; and thus the rude original of a ballad, with the ballad characteristics of situation and incremental repetition and refrain, is evolved, an authorless composition from the start. Such is the communal origin of the ballad, as a type, for which Professor Gummere contends.

And not of the type only, but of our British ballads. Altho "it should be cried from the housetops that no one expects to find in the ballads of the collections anything which springs directly from the ancient source," altho the ballad as we know it has been "ennobled and enriched on its traditional course,"

yet it "is originally a product of the people under conditions of improvisation and choral dance." As I have already pointed out, the formula of "improvisation and tradition" must be intended to apply to the 'authentic' ballads that we have, for otherwise no distinctive origin is secured for them; their originals must be ascribed, on any other hypothesis, either to the individual poet or to tradition itself, and both of these proposals have been rejected. That is, we must recognize, for the place and time in which our ballads originated, a homogeneous society such as is required for the hypothesis of communal composition. In fact, we are not here left to inference. The life of the Scottish border, he says, in "the sixteenth century when our best traditional ballads were making," presented "homogeneous conditions beyond dispute" (pp. 59, 248). Under these conditions our ballads originated, in a fashion no longer possible. The conditions have passed away, and ballad-making is a closed account.

Thus we have reached, by a process of testing and rejecting, what must be Professor Gummere's position with regard to the origin of 'authentic' ballads in general, and of *Mary Hamilton* in particular. Of its tenability I must leave those to judge who are better versed in the social history of northern Britain than I am. There may have been in Scotland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries communities so homogeneous as to have had no consciousness of social classes, no peasantry, gentry, and nobility separated from each other by taste and culture, nothing to check the gregarious instinct and the improvising impulses of the festal throng. Mr. Henderson seems to doubt it (*Minstrelsy*, I., xxiii); Professor Gummere is so confident of it that he states it without argument. It may be that the process of oral tradition in such communities "ennobled and enriched" the rude original down to Scott's time, when the best versions of *Mary Hamilton* appear, and at the same time debased and disfigured it—for both these activities are assigned to tradition. And it may be that at some time since then these homogeneous communities ceased to exist. His "task here," as he has said himself (*Mod. Phil.*, I, 375, note), "is to prove the homogeneous conditions, once real, to be now no longer in existence, and also to prove the necessary connection of these conditions with communal poetry." Whether he has proved it or not, he asserts it, and it is an integral part of his contention that ballad making is a closed account and the *corpus* made up. My endeavor has been not to confirm or controvert his theory, but to show what his theory is.

It is not, I confess, the easiest theory for the modern mind to accept. It would be much easier to suppose that our ballad

of *Mary Hamilton* was made by some humble poet in a style approximating that of 'authentic' balladry, and that oral tradition has made from that original the versions that we have. This I take to be the position of Professor Kittredge (Introduction to the Cambridge edition of the *Ballads*), of Mr. Lang (Chamber's *Cycl. of Engl. Lit.*, ed. of 1901, I, 520ff.), and of Child himself (Johnson's *Universal Cyclopaedia*, 1893; tho he did not wish this to be taken as his final utterance on the ballad question). But it is not the position of *The Popular Ballad*. It nullifies the main thesis of that book, which is the communal origin of 'the genuine ballad of tradition.'

In conclusion, let it be repeated that, whatever judgment may ultimately be passed upon Professor Gummere's doctrine of ballad origin, the analysis of ballad style to which it led him, the convincing—shall we not say, final?—presentation of the structural and esthetic qualities of our British ballads, is a triumph of criticism and a thing to be thankful for.

Dr. Böckel's *Psychologie der Volksdichtung* appeared about the same time as *The Popular Ballad*. The alluring promise of the title is not fulfilled by the work itself, which, from the genially sentimental preface with its offer to lead us into "die Wunderwelt der Volksdichtung" to the romantic "Ausklang" with its exhortation to join in the reawakening of folksong as a cure for all the diseases of modern society, is marked by a really surprising absence of the critical sense. Its twenty-two chapters map out the subject enticingly—The Beginning of Folksong, The Nature of Popular Poetry, The Origin of the *Volkslied*, Women and their Share in Folksong, Laments for the Dead, Persistence of Popular Poetry, Migration of Folksongs, The Optimism of Popular Poetry, Man and Nature, History and Popular Poetry, etc.—and under each of these heads much curious and interesting information is got together with regard to the popular song of a great variety of lands and races. Dr. Böckel's reading in folksong has been wide and sympathetic, and has resulted in the assembling of a good deal of valuable material for the student. But the appearance of scientific method is deceptive and his "psychology" is mere schematism. His theory is beautifully simple. The *Lied* grows out of the *Ruf*; from the *Freudenruf* come songs of love, marriage, spring-time, harvest, dancing and derision; from the *Schmerzenruf*, *Toten-* and *Scheideklagen* of various sorts. The *Totenklage*, for instance, has three stages: (1) the cry of grief, with a song growing out of it, uttered by the women relatives of the dead; (2) professional *voceri*; (3) the decline of the custom; and of these the "älteste Stufe ist die dichterisch wertvollste, weil sie der Empfindung unmittelbaren poetischen Ausdruck verleiht." The growth of the song out of the cry

takes place only among *Naturvölker*, who are described as peoples that "der Kultur noch fernstehen und im unmittelbaren Zusammenhange mit der Natur leben," tho they are found to include the humble folk of most European countries down to—well, not very long ago. Among them the process of composition was the spontaneous and immediate expression of feeling. To quote: "Erlebnisse weckten im sangeslustigen Naturzustande der Menschheit die Gabe des Dichtens. In den Volksliedern finden sich noch Spuren solcher unmittelbaren Sangeskunst, Erzählungen von Geschehnissen, bei denen das soeben Erlebte den unmittelbaren Anstoss zur Entstehung des Liedes gab. So entquillt in ersten Rausch der Freude des gewährten Liebesglückes dem erregten Gemüt des Begünstigten ein Lied, wie es ihm sonst wohl nicht gelungen war." And he proceeds to give instances,—half a dozen German and French ballads in which the hero or heroine is represented as giving vent to the emotion arising from the situation in verse—the verse of the ballad, of course. By this sort of argument one might be tempted to prove that people in Shakspeare's time carried on their daily conversation in blank verse.

Dr. Böckel's *Naturvölker* seem to correspond in the main with Professor Gummere's "homogeneous communities," but the term is much more loosely used. *Spielleute* and *Edelleute* are both to be found among *Naturvölker*, also (p. 428) the arts of architecture and painting as well as music and poetry. Neither is the festal throng a necessary condition for the production of *Volksdichtung*, as appears from the case described on page 94 on the authority of *Das Deutsche Volkslied*, VIII, 72. "About the middle of the last century, in the Böhmerwald, a peasant lad was slain at his sweetheart's window, out of revenge. Shortly afterwards a *sangesfrohe Dienstmagd*, working by herself in the forest, conceived the idea of making a song on this murder, and that same day composed several *G'sätzln* which she sang that evening in the *Bauernstube*. Each following day brought fresh stanzas, which were all composed to an air (*singend gedichtet*). Thus a song was made which is sung to this day in the Böhmerwald." This is genuine folksong for Dr. Böckel, apparently, and is a rather interesting instance of humble and unlettered, but solitary, laborious (for she seems to have composed by herself in the forest, a few stanzas a day), and conscious authorship; but the product would not pass muster with Professor Gummere as a "popular ballad."

The book is full of interesting items like this, gathered from a great variety of sources, and with authorities duly cited. But it lacks much of being a satisfactory "psychology of folk-poetry."

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